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REMARKS

In the Office Action dated July 7, 2004, claims 1-40 are pending. Claims 1, 14, 33, 35, 37, and 39 are independent claims from which all other claims depend therefrom. Claims 1 and 14 are amended. Note that claims 1, 14, 33, 35, 37, and 39 are not amended for patentability reasons, but rather for clarification reasons.

Claims 1-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Burrows et al. (6,062,509).

Claims 1 and 14 have similar limitations and are therefore described together. Claim 1 recites a monument support system for an aircraft and claim 14 recites an overhead bin and monument support system also for an aircraft. Both claims 1 and 14 include the limitations of a support system including multiple aircraft frame elements, an adapter bridge, a coupling member, and a monument. The adapter bridge is coupled to the aircraft frame elements and has multiple attachment points. The monument is coupled to the aircraft frame elements via the adapter bridge and the coupling member. The coupling member has multiple attachment positions that correspond to the attachment points. Claim 14 in addition to the above stated limitations also recites the limitations of a bin being coupled to the aircraft frame elements via the adapter bridge.

The adaptor bridge allows the coupling member to be attached in various locations between the frame elements, which in turn allows the monument and the bin to be mounted in various locations relative to the adaptor bridge. This arrangement between the frame elements, the adapter bridge, the coupling member, the monument, and the bin accommodates for misalignment of monuments and bins relative to the frame elements and minimizes the amount of material and components utilized in supporting monuments and bins. For example, the systems of claims 1 and 14 eliminate the need for using rails in the supporting of monuments and bins. Rails tend to be heavy, encompass a significant amount of material, and extend the length of an aircraft.

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This is described in further detail in the background section of the present application.

Burrows discloses a bin mounting assembly for an aircraft that is supported by tie rods. Although not shown, in a typical aircraft the tie rods are coupled to and supported by frame elements. The tie rods support a series of cross ties, which are coupled between a pair of rails that extend the length of the aircraft. Shear plates are coupled between the cross ties and the rails and are coupled to and support the bins.

The Office Action states that Burrows discloses couplings (20), rails (14), and adaptors (12). Applicants submit that Burrows discloses shear plates (20), rails (14), and cross ties (12). The bin mounting assembly of Burrows has different components, which are in a different configuration than that of the claimed systems of the present application. One clear and distinct difference between the bin mounting assembly of Burrows and the claimed systems is the absence or nondisclosure of an adaptor bridge by Burrows. The claimed systems include an adaptor bridge that is coupled to the frame elements of an aircraft and that has multiple attachment point for coupling members, such as tie rods. Burrows on the other hand couples rails to the frame elements via tie rods.

In Burrows the rails are fixed relative to frame elements of the aircraft. This is unlike the claimed invention wherein the coupling member, such as a tie rod, has several attachment points on an adaptor bridge that is coupled to the frame elements. In addition, Burrows uses tie rods between frame elements and rails, whereas the claimed invention utilizes coupling members, such as tie rods, between an adaptor bridge and a monument.

The Office Action refers to the shear plates of Burrows as a coupling. The shear plates are coupled between the bin and the rails. Although the coupling member of the claimed invention is coupled to a monument or bin, it is also coupled to an adaptor bridge and has several attachment positions thereon.

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The Office Action refers to the cross tie as an adaptor. The cross tie of Burrows is coupled between a shear plate and a rail and has a single mounting or attachment location for a bin, whereas the claimed invention uses an adaptor bridge between and to couple coupling members to frame elements. The claimed adapter bridge has multiple attachment locations for the coupling members.

Also, note that the elements and configuration of the systems of claims 1 and 14 of the present application eliminate the need for rails, as are utilized by Burrows. The elimination of rails reduces the weight and material of the support systems.

Thus, Burrows fails to teach each and every element of claims 1 and 14 and in addition fails to teach or suggest the coupling arrangement between the elements of the systems of claims 1 and 14. Therefore, claims 1 and 14 are novel, nonobvious, and are in a condition for allowance at least under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) in view of Burrows. Also, since claims 2-13, and 15-32 depend from claims 1 and 14, respectfully, they are also novel, nonobvious, and are in a condition for allowance for at least the same reasons.

Claims 1-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Terwesten (USPN 5,938,149).

Terwesten discloses a mounting arrangement for cabin fixtures. Terwesten discloses side baggage compartments and center baggage compartments. The side compartments are supported by brackets that are coupled to an aircraft fuselage. Each bracket has a single attachment point for the fastening to a side compartment via a single bolt. The center compartments are supported by mounting arms. The mounting arms extend between struts and brackets and the center compartments. The struts and brackets are coupled to the fuselage.

As with Burrows, Terwesten also fails to teach or suggest the use of an adapter bridge. The Office Action refers to the side support brackets 35 as adapter bridges. Applicant submits that the support brackets are not adaptor bridges as defined and as utilized by the claimed invention. The support brackets extend between a fuselage and

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a side bin, whereas the adaptor bridges of the claimed invention are attached to frame elements and support coupling members, which in turn support monuments and bins. Also, the support brackets of Terwesten do not each have multiple attachment points as does the adapter bridges of the claimed systems.

Thus, Terwesten also fails to teach or suggest each and every element of claims 1 and 14, therefore claims 1 and 14 are also novel, nonobvious, and in a condition for allowance under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) in view of Terwesten. Since claims 2-13, and 15-32 depend from claims 1 and 14, respectfully, they are also novel, nonobvious, and are in a condition for allowance for at least the same reasons.

Claims 33-38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Burrows and as being anticipated by Terwesten.

Claims 33 and 37, like claims 1 and 14, include the limitations of an adapter bridge, coupled to aircraft frame elements and having multiple attachment points, and of a coupling member that has multiple attachment positions corresponding the attachment points. As stated above, neither Burrows nor Terwesten teach or suggest any of these limitations. Thus, claims 33 and 37 are also novel, nonobvious, and are in a condition for allowance.

Claim 35, like claims 1 and 14 includes the limitations of an adapter bridge coupled to aircraft frame elements and having multiple attachment points, which as stated is not taught or suggested by either Burrows or Terwesten. Claim 35 also includes the limitations of the adapter bridge being coupled between at least one pair of frame elements and a bin having multiple attachment positions corresponding to the attachment points. These limitations are also not taught or suggested by either reference.

Thus, Applicant submits that the rejections with regards to claims 33, 35, and 37 have been overcome, and since claims 34, 36, and 38 depend from claims 33, 35, and 37, respectfully, they are also novel, nonobvious, and are in a condition for allowance.

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Claims 39-40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Burrows and as being anticipated by Terwesten.

Claim 39, like claims 1, 14, 33 and 37, also recite the limitations of an adapter bridge coupled to aircraft frame elements and having multiple attachment points and of a coupling member that has multiple attachment positions corresponding the attachment points. As stated above, neither Burrows nor Terwesten teach or suggest any of these limitations.

In addition, claim 39 also includes the limitations of determining interior features, determining a plan layout of the interior features, and attaching bins and monuments to frame elements in response to the plan layout. Although not recited in claim 39, the interior features may include, for example, types, styles, sizes, and quantity of seats, bins, and monuments. A plan layout refers to the placement arrangement of the stated interior features. None of these limitations are taught or suggested by Burrows or Terwesten. Both Burrows and Terwesten simply disclose a single configuration of a bin mounting assembly and of an overhead baggage compartment support structure, respectfully, and the components thereof. Neither Burrows nor Terwesten suggest multiple configurations nor do they describe how different configurations can be supported.

The Office Action states that Burrows discloses determining interior features and a plan layout and refers to Figure 1 and col. 3, line 45-col. 4, line 5. In Figure 1 Burrows simply shows a bin mounting assembly and in the stated section Burrows states the components of the bin mounting assembly and describes the coupling arrangement thereof. Nowhere in Figure 1, in the stated section, or anywhere else in Burrows is there disclosure or suggestion of determining interior features and a plan layout.

The Office Action states that Terwesten discloses determining interior features and a plan layout and refers to col. 3, lines 20-55. In col. 3, lines 20-55 Terwesten describes the mounting of side baggage compartments and center baggage compartments. Terwesten states the components utilized to mount the baggage

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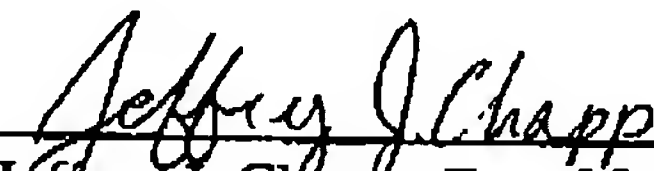
compartments to an aircraft fuselage. Nowhere in col. 3 or anywhere else in Terwesten are interior features or a plan layout determined. Thus, claim 39 is also novel, nonobvious, and is in a condition for allowance. Since claim 40 depends from claim 39, claim 40 is also novel, nonobvious, and is in a condition for allowance.

In light of the amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that all objections and rejections are now overcome. The Applicant has added no new matter to the application by these amendments. The application is now in condition for allowance and expeditious notice thereof is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees related to this Office Action response or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-0476.

Respectfully submitted,

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